

Our New Identity in Christ

"Who are you?" We all have a sense of identity – a sense of "who we are." Much of it was developed during our upbringing, as well as our education, but also much from our deciding who we wanted to be. Routinely, this is defined in functional terminology, "*I want to be an accountant or attorney*"; "*I want to be a wife*" "*I want to be a nurse or a doctor.*" Often we take on a sense of identity that is multifaceted. The point is, most of our 'actions' come from that sense of identity, not the other way around. As a doctor, you would do certain things, etc. The connection between your **identity** and your actions is an aspect of how God designed you.

So why is understanding your **new identity in Christ** so important? Because identity precedes and effects behaviour (also attitudes, emotions, values, etc.). What you do will tend to flow from who you perceive yourself to be. If you take your identity from your profession, your behaviour will reflect this by the hours you spend at work, and by where you spend your time outside work (to further your professional skills and image). If you take your identity from what you own, then having expensive things becomes paramount. I have seen so many people lose their identity through the lure of success.

Let's consider an important passage that demonstrates the principle that our "behaviour" (our thoughts, attitudes, etc.) flow directly out of who we perceive ourselves to be. **Colossians 3:1-3**, "*If then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.*"

The New Testament order is not... "Do in order to be," but rather, "*Act consistently with who you really are.*" In your own life, you need to look deeper than the behavioural 'symptoms' and see the connection between your behaviour and your **identity** issues. You will always act the way you SEE yourself! When you accept this, deep and lasting change can take place. As a born-again Christian, you must realise that wrong actions often signify that you are believing lies about our **identity**. That the devil is probably deceiving you! For that reason, you should prayerfully identify what those lies are and choose to replace them with the truth about your **identity** (who God says you are). Why not ask Him to show you what it would look like if you were to act on your "new identity" - in the current situation you're in. You'll be amazed! Suddenly you will feel empowered! You'll feel like you're actually living the supernatural life we've been talking about.

Imagine adopting a dysfunctional boy from the ghetto. Why does he steal and fight? Couldn't you just tell him to stop? No, he needs to realise that as your son he is a "new person" who now has adequate provision, before real change can occur. It's the same with us and our heavenly Father, we often act like we are still living in the ghetto instead of acting like we are seated in Christ at the right hand of God. The result of appropriating this truth is continual spiritual growth.

Appropriation is our role in applying our **new identity** in an ongoing and practical way. Applying this truth consists of three sequential steps, which Paul outlines in **Romans 6**...

(1) **Know**. (Verse 6) "*Knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be*

done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin."

This means learning what the Bible teaches about your new identity, and regularly remembering and reflecting on it (**2 Peter 1:12,13,15**). Therefore, you need to study this truth until you really understand it. Ask God to illuminate it so that you see its significance in your life - meditate on it, constantly remind yourself of it. Read and reread scriptures about it. Don't forget **Romans 12:2**, *"...Be transformed by the renewing of your minds."*

(2) **Consider.** (Verse 11) *"Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus."* Choose to affirm what God says about your identity in spite of all the contrary feelings, thoughts, past behavioural evidence, or what other people say about you. You are a child of God! Let's assume that you have never had more than £150 in your checking account. Suddenly, a trusted friend informs you that he has deposited £100,000 into your account. You check with the bank and ascertain that this is indeed the case. How important is it that you enter that amount in your check ledger, and believe that entry? What if you listened instead to your feelings or your family members who keep telling you that you only have £150? If you want to reap the benefit of the £100,000, you have to choose to believe the actual amount exists! Otherwise, you could go on living as though you only had £150!

This means monitoring your thought-life, becoming aware of the lies about yourself (as they present themselves to you), and choosing to replace those lies with what God says is true about you (**2 Corinthians 10:5**). You should ask the Lord to sensitise you to these lies, and help you to see how your **new identity** applies to you in specific areas. This is the missing link for so many of you. Sometimes you may need more mature believers to help you discern what these lies may be.

(3) **Present.** (Verse 13) *"Do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God."* This means choosing to step out in faith and acting in ways that are consistent with your new identity. This is the step that makes what you have learned a "living truth." Presenting, usually involves both a negative and positive step. It is necessary to choose to turn away from immoral habits, but it is also necessary to turn to God in ways that expose you to His alternatives. Real change always involves the willingness to say "No!" However, this is ultimately futile unless we also say "Yes!" to the ways which expose us to God's life-changing power. This is the "Resist and Replace" principle.

KNOW – CONSIDER – PRESENT. The point here is that God alone meets our deepest desires and human necessities through our **new identity in Christ**. To the extent that we are ignorant of and/or don't apply this truth, we will go on suffering as needlessly "needy" people, trying to get other people or materials things to meet our needs, and being disappointed by them when they don't. Remember, it is *God who supplies all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus*.

Now, what happens when you take an identity statement like, "I am weak" and bring your **new identity** in Jesus to bear upon such a statement? If within your new thought / belief system, your faith in Jesus operates at a higher level of conception than the belief, "I am weak", then the old belief disappears. If it doesn't, build

and intensify your **faith** in Jesus by making the picture of your life bigger, brighter, more positive. You do this by “empowering” it with the Word of God and confessing who He says you are!

Rebuild your **identity** with such statements as, *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me"*, and then bring it to bear on the old ‘limiting’ belief. Your inabilities will be replaced by God’s abilities! Your weaknesses will be replaced by His strength! Your foolishness will be replaced by His wisdom! Your lack will be replaced by His glorious riches! And Jesus will be glorified every the time!

One of the most important things we can do in our spiritual walk is to embrace our new identity by seeing ourselves through Christ’s eyes. That is, who we are "in Christ." Below are listed (with supporting Scriptures) just a few of the many truths contained in God’s infallible Word concerning our secure position in Christ Jesus. The facts are there ... all we need to do now is believe them!

Here is a list that reveals your **true identity in Jesus Christ**...

I am a new creation (**2 Corinthians 5:17**)

I am God's child (**John 1:12**)

I am a member of God's household (**Ephesians 2:19**)

I am a citizen of heaven (**Philippians 3:20**)

I am Christ's friend (**John 15:15**)

I am His disciple (**John 13:15**)

I am hidden with Christ in God (**Colossians 3:3**)

I am born of God and the evil one cannot touch me (**1 John 5:18**)

I am blessed in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing.

I am holy and blameless (**Ephesians 1:4**)

I am forgiven (**Ephesians 1:8; Colossians 1:14**)

I am sealed with the promised Holy Spirit (**Ephesians 1:13**)

I am a saint (**Ephesians 1:18**)

I am salt and light of the earth (**Matthew 5:13-14**)

I am God's co-worker (**2 Corinthians 6:1**)

I am a minister of reconciliation (**2 Corinthians 5:17-20**)

I am crucified with Christ (**Galatians 2:20**)

I am raised up with Christ (**Ephesians 2:6; Colossians 2:12**)

I am alive with Christ (**Ephesians 2:5**)

I am seated with Christ in the heavenly realms (**Ephesians 2:6**)

I am God's workmanship (**Ephesians 2:10**)

I am a holy temple (**Ephesians 2:21; 1 Corinthians 6:19**)

I am a dwelling for the Holy Spirit (**Ephesians 2:22**)

I am dead to sin (**Romans 1:12**)

I am not alone (**Hebrews 13:5**)

I am chosen and dearly loved (**Colossians 3:12**)

I am blameless (**1 Corinthians 1:8**)

I am set free (**Romans 8:2; John 8:32**)

I am safe (**1 John 5:18**)

I am healed (**1 Peter 2:24**)

I am protected (**John 10:28**)

I am the righteousness of God (**2 Corinthians 5:21**)

I am redeemed from the curse of the Law (**Galatians 3:13**)

I am qualified to share in His inheritance (**Colossians 1:12**)

I am faithful (**Ephesians 1:1**)

I am victorious (**1 John 5:4**)

I am more than a conqueror (**Romans 8:37**)